

Perkinsville Road — No
Guardrails, No Problem

Yep. Bisbee's Ballpark Is
Even Older Than Fenway

The Ferocious Nature
of the Cactus Wren

ARIZONA

HIGHWAYS

ESCAPE • EXPLORE • EXPERIENCE

MAY 2009

family adventures

15 Easy Trips to
Take With the Kids,
From a Scenic Drive
in Sedona to a
Pioneer Museum
in Snowflake

+

ARIZONA BY
HELICOPTER:
The Ultimate Way
to See the State

CANOEING
THE COLORADO

HIKING THE
MOGOLLON RIM

features

14 FAMILY ADVENTURES

Clark Griswold wasn't worried about finding the Grand Canyon. "It's the biggest hole in the world," he said in *Family Vacation*. Whether you're loading up the "Family Truckster" for a trip to the world's Seventh Natural Wonder, or just looking for a quick, economical family adventure all your own, Arizona has something for every family. BY KELLY KRAMER

20 WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Arizona isn't exactly known for its water supply. Canyons and cactuses, yes; water, no. Well, like the Arizona Cardinals, who proved that a football team from the desert really could go to the Super Bowl, we're using this month's portfolio to prove that Arizona has some of the most spectacular watering holes in the world. BY GARY LADD

30 A BETTER VIEW

The Grand Canyon is spectacular no matter where you're standing — on the South Rim, along the river or on the roof of a Winnebago. Those vantage points, however, pale in comparison to the views you'll get from a Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter. It's the best way to see the Canyon, as well as Sedona, Monument Valley and every other inch of Arizona. BY KERIDWEN CORNELIUS PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIEL HEISEY

40 THIS GORGE IS GORGEOUS

In Western Arizona, the Interstate 40 bridge and a railroad trestle cross the Colorado River side by side. The bridges divide two worlds. To the north lies Topock Marsh, an artificially created backwater of tranquil lakes and cattails. To the south lies Topock Gorge, an absolutely beautiful place comprising 20 miles of narrow, twisting river. Either way, the water under the bridges is something special. BY DAVE ESKEES PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTY CORDANO

departments

2 EDITOR'S LETTER 3 CONTRIBUTORS 4 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

5 THE JOURNAL

People, places and things from around the state, including a look at Bisbee's historic Warren Ballpark, a Williams B&B that mixes English charm with Guitar Hero, and the ferocious tendencies of the state bird.

44 SCENIC DRIVE

Perkinsville Road: Although the last few miles can get a little hairy — no guardrails — this scenic drive offers some great history along with the wow.

46 HIKE OF THE MONTH

Rim Lakes Vista Trail: In addition to the largest ponderosa pine forest in the world, this route offers great views, wildlife and an abundance of ozone.

48 WHERE IS THIS?



www.arizonahighways.com

TALK TO US: In this month's cover story we spotlight some of the state's best family adventures (see page 14). Of course, this isn't a comprehensive list, and we know there are other great getaways out there. When you get a chance, tell us about your favorites at editor@arizonahighways.com.

GET MORE ONLINE:

- + In our "Hike of the Month," we feature one of the Mogollon Rim's best. For other great hikes, visit the "Hiking Guide" on our home page.
- + Get details on some of this month's biggest events, including the state's many Cinco de Mayo festivals, in our "Events Calendar."
- + Check out the finalists in our online photography contest. See "Photo Contest."

► At sunrise, Merrick Butte and The Mittens cast long shadows across the floor of Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park in Northern Arizona. PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIEL HEISEY

FRONT COVER Just outside of Sedona, the red and orange sandstone columns of Camel Head rise majestically within Munds Mountain Wilderness. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIAS BUTLER

BACK COVER A canopy of green leaves shade the intertwined limbs of a cottonwood tree in Paria River Canyon. PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY LADD



"Com'on kids, we're goin' to the dump." Not Cape Cod. Not Disneyland. The dump. When I was a kid back in the '60s, my family would spend part of the summer in Canada, and going to the dump was an annual ritual. We weren't looking for garbage; we were looking for bears — bears that didn't have a problem with half-eaten TV dinners and stale Cap'n Crunch. I can still remember piling into the F-150, driving down a long dirt road and looking out through the bugs on the windshield. "Where are the bears?" "Can they break into the truck?" "Why does Jeff get to hold the binoculars?"

I remember the ride, but 40 years later, I can't remember if we ever saw any bears, or anything other than each other. With hindsight, I realize it wasn't about the wildlife. It was about the adventure, which, for my family, was usually small-town and laid-back, like a Woody Guthrie song or the news from Lake Wobegon. And Mother Nature was almost always the main attraction. Had I grown up in Arizona, instead of Wisconsin, it wouldn't have been any different. As you'll see in this month's cover story, most of the state's best family adventures have some connection to the great outdoors.

In all, we'll tell you about 15 things to do with the kids, and none of them involve a character named Chuck E. Cheese. One of the first places we'll tell you about is the Grand Canyon Field Institute, which offers classes in wilderness studies, family hiking, culture and natural history. At the other end of the state, down in the Coronado National Forest, is Onyx Cave. It's not as sexy as Kartchner Caverns, but as Kelly Kramer writes, it's "a virtual honeycomb of rooms and passageways."

Caves, canyons, scenic drives, museums ... if you're looking for a quick and economical family vacation this summer, this story is a good place to start. If you're looking for something completely different, call Maria Langer. She's the chief pilot for Flying M Air, a helicopter touring company that offers a scenic view unlike anything you'll ever get through the windshield of an F-150.

Writer Keridwen Cornelius can attest to that. We recently sent her on a six-day tour with Langer. As she writes in *A Better View*: "As our shadow streaks over the isolated dirt roads and hogans that mark the Navajo Nation, it dawns on me: A Jeep can trundle you along back roads, but up here back roads are meaningless. A small airplane offers bird's-eye views from tiny windows, but it lacks the maneuverability to trace the curves of a river gorge."



If you like what you see in this magazine every month, check out *Arizona Highways Television*, an Emmy Award-winning program hosted by former news anchor Robin Sewell. Now in its fifth season, the show does with audio and video what we do with ink and paper — it showcases the people, places and things of the Grand Canyon State, from the spectacular landscapes and colorful history to the fascinating culture and endless adventure. And that's just the beginning. "For me, the show is about more than just the destinations," Robin says. "It's about the people behind the scenes. It's their stories that make the destinations so interesting." Indeed, there's a reason this show wins so many awards — it's second-to-none, and we're proud to have our name on it. Take a look. For broadcast times, visit our Web site, www.arizonahighways.com, and click the *Arizona Highways Television* link on our home page.

That's the conclusion everyone will come to after taking Langer's Southwest Circle Helicopter Adventure, which makes stops at Sedona, the Grand Canyon, Lake Powell, Monument Valley and Flagstaff, while cruising over several famous spots in between. In her story, Keridwen will make you feel like you're right there. Reinforcing that sensation is the photography of Adriel Heisey. He's been flying solo since he was a sophomore in high school, and today, he's regarded as one of the best aerial photographers in the world. You'll see what I mean. Of course, not everyone is cut out for a bumpy ride in the sky. Some, like writer Dave Eskes, prefer the nonthreatening nature of a canoe.

That was his ride of choice on a recent trip through Topock Gorge, which is part of the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, and is home to 300 species of birds and 47 species of mammals. As he writes in *This Gorge Is Gorgeous*, Topock is "20 miles of narrow, twisting river in as natural a state as can be found anywhere on the Colorado River." It's one of those places that often gets overlooked, but it's definitely worth a look. Like a trip to the dump in Canada, there's a good chance you'll see some wildlife, and if you don't, so what. It's an adventure you'll remember for at least 40 years. Maybe even longer.

HERE'S WHAT'S ON OUR PLATE

Last summer, state lawmakers authorized an "Arizona Highways" license plate. Like other specialty plates, the proceeds from ours will go to a good cause, specifically, the promotion of travel and tourism throughout the state. As you know, the stories we do every month help support the mom-and-pops in places like Pinetop and Patagonia, as well as the more traditional getaways. If you'd like to order our plate, visit www.servicearizona.com.

ROBERT STIEVE, *editor*



ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

MAY 2009 VOL. 85, NO. 5

800-543-5432
www.arizonahighways.com

Publisher
WIN HOLDEN

Editor
ROBERT STIEVE

Senior Editor
RANDY SUMMERLIN

Managing Editor
SALLY BENFORD

Editorial Administrator
NIKKI KIMBEL

Director of Photography
PETER ENSENBERGER

Photography Editor
JEFF KIDA

Art Director
BARBARA GLYNN DENNEY

Deputy Art Director
SONDA ANDERSSON PAPPAN

Design Production Assistant
DIANA BENZEL-RICE

Map Designer
KEVIN KIBSEY

Production Director
MICHAEL BIANCHI

Webmaster
VICTORIA J. SNOW

Director of Sales & Marketing
KELLY MERO

Circulation Director
NICOLE BOWMAN

Finance Director
BOB ALLEN

Information Technology
CINDY BORMANIS

Corporate or Trade Sales
602-712-2019

Sponsorship Sales Representation
ERNIE MULHOLLAND
EMM MEDIA SERVICES LLC
602-971-6260
emm1224@cox.net

Letters to the Editor
editor@arizonahighways.com
2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009

Governor
JANICE K. BREWER

Director, Department of Transportation
JOHN S. HALIKOWSKI

Arizona Transportation Board
Chairman
DELBERT HOUSEHOLDER

Vice Chairman
ROBERT M. MONTROYA

Members
FELIPE ANDRES ZUBIA, WILLIAM J. FELDMEIER, BARBARA ANN LUNDSTROM, VICTOR M. FLORES

International Regional Magazine Association
2006, 2005, 2004, 2002, 2001
MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

Western Publications Association
2006, 2004, 2002, 2001
BEST TRAVEL & IN-TRANSIT MAGAZINE

Arizona Highways® (ISSN 0004-1521) is published monthly by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Subscription price: \$24 a year in the U.S., \$44 outside the U.S. Single copy: \$3.99 U.S. **Subscription correspondence and change of address information:** *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 653, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0653. Periodical postage paid at Phoenix, AZ, and at additional mailing office. CANADA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS MAIL PRODUCT (CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION) SALES AGREEMENT NO. 4122051. SEND RETURNS TO QUEBECOR WORLD, P.O. BOX 875, WINDSOR, ON N9A 6P2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 653, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0653. Copyright © 2009 by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. The magazine does not accept and is not responsible for unsolicited materials.

PRODUCED IN THE USA



GARY LADD

This month's portfolio (page 20) takes on an impressionistic feel, thanks in large part to the eye of photographer Gary Ladd and his love of the very places he shot: the Colorado Plateau, the Vermilion Cliffs and the Grand Canyon. "The best part of being a photographer is spending time in, learning about and experiencing some of Earth's greatest landscapes," Ladd says. "I can't imagine what could possibly be better." A contributor to *Arizona Highways* since 1972, Ladd's work also appears in *National Geographic Adventure*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Life* magazine, among others.

DAVE ESKES

When writer Dave Eskes explored Topock Gorge (see *This Gorge Is Gorgeous*, page 40), he found the most stunning scenery at Devil's Elbow. "There, the river is squeezed on both sides by jagged peaks, giving it a lunar appearance," he says. "I envisioned it under a full moon, and the English poet William Blake came to mind. It seemed to be something he would describe in a phantasmagorical opium dream." And although Eskes ended up a little wet — at one point, his canoe flipped — the real challenge of the adventure was in navigating the crowds. "As you come out of the lower end of Topock Gorge near Lake Havasu, you're greeted by a cacophony of speedboats, water-skiers and sandbar beer busts that jolt you out of your 19th century idyll and back into the untidy present," he says. Eskes' work also appears in *Biography*.



ADRIEL HEISEY

Aerial photographer Adriel Heisey (see *A Better View*, page 30) was drawn to Arizona some 20 years ago for a few simple reasons: "The clarity of the sky, the nakedness of the earth, the scarcity of modern infrastructure and the presence of native peoples." A flyer since the age of 16, Heisey also appreciates the synergy between Arizona's landscape and the sky. "The two are united," he says. "And each seems to engender the other. My favorite reason to fly is simply to see and to photograph. My favorite reason to photograph is because I'm airborne over a wondrous planet." In addition to *Arizona Highways*, Heisey's work can be seen in *National Geographic* and *National Geographic Adventure*.





COVER LETTER

I really like your new cover masthead and, as always, I like the articles, although I did enjoy the stories that you used to print and the jokes, as lame as some were. How about more artwork like that of Maynard Dixon in the January 2009 issue?

DONAL JOLLEY, RIMFOREST, CALIFORNIA



MONUMENTAL OVERSIGHT

I'm certain many people familiar with Cochise County would be as surprised as I was to read in David Roberts' article [*Winter Wonderland*, December 2008], "There's no monument to Geronimo." Perhaps he's not familiar with the surrender monument. My family always paused there on trips to Portal, and I have pictures of my two children there. I checked my father's book, *Cochise County Arizona, Past and Present* (by Ervin L. Bond) to make certain I wasn't confused. On page 21 is a picture with

the caption: "Geronimo's surrender monument, 40 miles northeast of Douglas on Highway 80. Built in 1934." Maybe on his next trip he'll venture a little farther to Douglas.

LEONA BOND BELL, REDMOND, WASHINGTON

SACRED GROUND SUPPORT

For all the injustices this country has done to the American Indians, I find it very upsetting that in the 21st century our society is still trying to take their land or impose our will on a people we should be looking at and learning from on how to live in harmony with nature [*Battle Ground*, January 2009]. When I hear arguments about ski resorts' "struggle to survive," I do feel bad about the impact to the workforce and the local economy, but I'm also reminded about a book I read titled *Black Elk Speaks* written by John G. Gerhardt. Everyone should read that book to truly understand about a struggle for survival and how deeply the American Indian respects, depends and lives with nature. I think it's long overdue for this country of ours to honor our treaties with the American Indians, respect them, their culture and beliefs, leave their land alone, and, most of all, leave their sacred sites sacred.

DICK MATTSOON, BRICK TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

PALAVRAS GENTIS DO BRASIL

Today I received a package from some North American friends, and inside it I found an *Arizona Highways* magazine. It's a very beautiful magazine, with great pictures and excellent articles.

CARLOS EDUARDO DA SILVA
SANTA CATARINA, BRAZIL

ROGER THAT!

As an editor, it must be challenging to receive the supportive and not so supportive letters that cross your desk and then have to decide which ones to include in a future issue. Given his extreme negative view, it

is to your credit, I believe, that you included Mr. Hatch's letter regarding your photography issue in the February 2009 issue. It's of concern to me, however, that there's someone "out there" that can generate that much anger over a legitimate artistic debate.

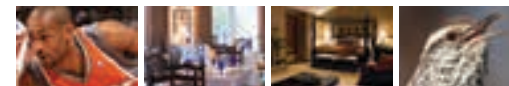
ROGER SWENSON, PRESCOTT



BACKCOUNTRY BACKLASH

When I read [*It's All Downhill*, December 2008], I was immediately alarmed — it reads like a "how not to do it manual" when it comes to backcountry travel in avalanche country. I'm glad to see these gentlemen are still alive. Your readership was not well served by this article, and certainly may be led astray and grossly misguided if they were to practice winter backcountry travel along these lines. Any article written with such braggadocio style, in reality, reveals the ignorance of the author and should be analyzed carefully for its inherent value. I recommend these gentlemen (and your readership) enroll in a National Ski Patrol-sponsored basic avalanche class (open to the public) before ever venturing into avalanche country. On a positive note, it was refreshing to see these skiers carried the essentials: avalanche probes, shovels and transceivers ("beacons") with them, but these are no substitute for fundamental knowledge of avalanche snowcraft.

GLENN MINUTH
SUNRISE PARK RESORT SKI PATROL, SUNRISE ■



A TOUCH OF GLASS

This month, *Arizona Highways* and Desert Botanical Garden are sponsoring a photo contest based on the Dale Chihuly glass-sculpture exhibit that is currently on display at the garden. Photos of the exhibit will be judged by Dale Chihuly and a panel of *Arizona Highways* photographers. For contest rules and prize information, visit www.arizonahighways.com or www.dbg.org.



PETER BRANDEIS



NICK BEREZENKO

Getting Her Act Together

For actress/producer Jody Drake, hitting the stage is as much about history as it is about applause. That’s why she’s been portraying a pioneer legend for more than a decade.

By KENDALL WRIGHT

JODY DRAKE PRIDES HERSELF on being a “child of the West.” A lifelong Arizona resident, Drake, the creator of Blue Rose Theatre Company in Prescott, has spearheaded historically accurate productions of notable characters in Arizona history for more than 14 years.

An accomplished actress and director — responsible for researching, writing and producing 22 original plays with her theater company — Drake is perhaps best recognized for her first-person historical performances as Sharlot Hall, Arizona’s famed frontier poet and historian.

In her decade-long run as Hall, Drake has performed for former governors Janet Napolitano and Jane Hull, state Senator Polly Rosenbaum and retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.

“I think it subconsciously all started when I was 16 and working for the Sharlot Hall Museum,” Drake says. “Something clicked that summer, and ever since, Sharlot and I have had this wonderful affinity going. Maybe it’s all in the chin — who knows?”

Born, raised and still living in Prescott, Drake says

that history has always been her passion. After studying theater in college, Drake knew she wanted to incorporate that love with her dream of creating a theater company. The name of her first company, Cold Turkey, was inspired by one of Sharlot Hall’s poems. The company got its start performing historically themed dinner theater pieces for a local steakhouse, and that’s when Drake decided to change the name to something more professional.

“I guess I got restless doing the same kind of conventional acting,” she says. “There’s nothing like the presence of reality [a historical piece]. There’s nothing that fascinating or rich that I can make up.”

The Blue Rose troupe has performed pieces statewide at such places as Riordan Mansion State Historic Park and the Jerome Historical Society. Since 1994, it has partnered with the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott, where the company keeps its permanent home.

For a woman whose love of history has come full circle, Drake says she stays energized in the hope that her performances give a sense of belonging to people who are just beginning to learn about their community’s history, as well as those who helped shape it.

“An understanding of how far we’ve come has always kept me humble and able to appreciate today,” Drake says. “I want to give people a sense of legacy with what I do, and to make them feel a sense of community and pride for the future of Arizona — no matter where they might be living.”

PRATT’S

Q&A

Grant Hill Phoenix Suns Forward/Guard

If you were trying to convince LeBron James or Dwayne Wade that Arizona is one of the most beautiful places in the country, where would you take them? Camelback Mountain. It is definitely a site to see, and the views from the top are amazing.

What’s the best place to grab a meal after a Suns game? Delux [in Phoenix]. It’s open late, so I can go there after the games.

If you and the Gorilla were making a road trip to Sedona, which would you choose: vintage convertible or a Harley with a sidecar? Vintage convertible.

What are some of your favorite ways to enjoy the state during the off-season? I normally go back home during the off-season, but during the season I enjoy taking my daughter to Golfland Sunsplash (the Sunsplash side), movies, shopping at Desert Ridge Marketplace, and going to Dave & Buster’s.

Which do you prefer: A golf course in Northern Arizona or a golf course in the Sonoran Desert? Sonoran Desert.

— Dave Pratt is the author of *Behind the Mic: 30 Years in Radio*.



D. LIPPITT/EINSTEIN

Inn Style

If the cliché “some things never change” has an appropriate place in Arizona, it’s the Arizona Inn. Tucson’s landmark hotel has been offering the same classic fare and vintage style for eight decades, and that’s a good thing.

By BRUCE ITULE

In 1953, the Arizona Inn dinner menu featured fresh filet of English sole, baby lobster, Louisiana jumbo frog legs, roast turkey, prime rib and poached eggs on ham. Not much has changed at the Tucson landmark, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today’s dinner menu includes Chilean sea bass, Scottish salmon, bouillabaisse, Colorado lamb chops, and a weekly tasting entrée in which executive chef Odell Baskerville says he and his staff can “show creativity.”

The Arizona Inn is no eat-and-run joint. Stay long enough to dine in the AAA Four Diamond Main Dining Room, Catlin Room, or the Audubon Bar at the swimming pool, or one of the special-occasion rooms. Stay long enough to savor the history of this family owned inn, which has been managed and restored by generations of the Greenway family. And listen to the wood floors, even those covered by carpet. They creak. Oh, the stories they could tell.

The real story started in 1922 when Isabella Greenway came to Arizona with her second husband, John Campbell Greenway. Four years later, John died, and Isabella — also a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt and later Arizona’s first U.S. congresswoman — was once again a widow.

She initially opened The Arizona Hut furniture factory in downtown Tucson. After the 1929 stock market crash, Greenway built the Arizona Inn in a desert area northeast of downtown, in part to create demand for Hut furniture.

The inn opened on December 18, 1930, and people who made the bumpy, out-of-town ride were treated to country inn hospitality for about \$12 a night. Those who make the paved, urban drive today pay more, but the hospitality remains. Isabella’s granddaughter, Patty Doar,

The Arizona Inn is located at 2200 E. Elm Street in Tucson. For more information, call 520-325-1541 or visit www.arizonainn.com.

and Doar’s son, Will Conroy, run the place.

“People have memories here,” Doar says. “They were married here. They brought their children here. We want to keep their memories connected to a place that doesn’t change.”

TUCSON

Original Hut tables and ladder-back chairs are still used in the dining rooms, which offer breakfast, lunch and dinner on white tablecloths and china. Coffee comes in a cup, not a mug. Iced tea includes a lemon wedge and a fresh mint leaf.

The mint isn’t grown at the inn, but “a lot of the time it comes from my garden at home,” Baskerville says.

The breakfast menu offers omelets, smoked salmon, crepes and blue-corn pancakes. A hint: Order the freshly baked Arizona Inn banana bread with anything. It’s that good.

At lunch there’s the Arizona Inn cheeseburger and also duck confit, grilled shrimp, tuna-steak sandwich and crab cakes. Baskerville says that at lunch or any other time his staff is accommodating. “We have regular guests, and we know what they like.”



EDWARD MCCAIN



PETER SCHWEPKER

Modern English

It exudes English Tudor charm, that’s true, but the FireLight B&B in Williams is anything but haughty. Heck, it even has a Wii.

By KERIDWEN CORNELIUS

DON’T BE FOOLED BY the fact that the FireLight B&B’s bedrooms are all named after English counties: Somerset, Yorkshire, Devon, Cornwall. This isn’t one of those Victorian throwbacks filled with dusty red velvet and the mingling scent of mothballs and potpourri. For one thing, they have Wii. And though the décor is a nod to cheery English country houses, it’s plush and modern. In fact, it’s this mixture of luxury and interesting activity that’s the hallmark of the FireLight.

“We wanted a feeling of cozy elegance, where people would feel OK putting their feet up on the furniture,” says Eric Eikenberry, co-owner of the FireLight with his partner, Debi Zecchin.

Three years ago, the couple bought and completely renovated the home, which is tucked into the forest overlooking downtown Williams. Eikenberry, a contractor, made all the structural changes, adding romantic ceiling beams and hardwood floors.

Zecchin brought her skills as an interior designer, taking her cue from the home’s English Tudor exterior. The handsome Yorkshire suite, with its four-poster bed and chandeliers, exudes a subtle sense of royalty. The soothing Cornwall room evokes that coastal county’s seascapes,

while the Devon’s floral and arboreal accents bring the garden indoors. And from the butterscotch-colored Somerset room, decked with antique plates, guests can watch the sun set over Williams. Plus, a fireplace and bathrobes make every room cozier, and throughout the inn you’ll find whimsical touches, like a flying pig motif.

That’s the luxury part of the equation; here’s where the games

begin. In the upstairs game room, guests can compete on the antique shuffleboard table, play Scrabble overlooking the town, or try their hand at virtual sports with Wii — all to an oldies soundtrack streaming from the 1947 jukebox. And that’s when they’re not riding the train to the Grand Canyon.

“Twenty-somethings enjoy coming here as much as the retirees,” says Eikenberry, who admits he has “a blast” running the B&B.

A native Arizonan, Eikenberry managed the Williams Tourist Information Center for several years, adding to his wealth of knowledge about Arizona. He and Zecchin met when he performed as a train robber on the Grand Canyon Railway and, apparently, stole her heart as well as her purse. Though he’s since put thievery behind him, he still performs as “Tombstone Red,” playing accordion and harmonica.

He’s also become quite the chef. Breakfast at the FireLight might include a crustless potato quiche, croissant french toast or a Mexican strata. But always on the menu is a generous helping of hospitality and humor.

“People come here as guests,” says Eikenberry, “and they leave as friends.”

The FireLight Bed and Breakfast is located at 175 W. Mead Avenue in Williams. For more information, call 888-838-8218 or visit www.firelightbandb.com.

Photography on the Fly

If you can make a living doing something you love, you’re lucky. If you can make a living doing two of the things you love, you’re right up there with Adriel Heisey, one of the best aerial photographers in the world.

Interviewed by JEFF KIDA, photo editor

Which came first, flying or photography?

Flying. I started taking flying lessons in the 10th grade and soloed at 16, but both interests came into my life early. Due to the cost of flying lessons, photography was more affordable and accessible, and by the time I was a senior in high school I had bought my first SLR [camera] and learned how to use it.

What kinds of things nurtured your photography?

Discovering a single-lens reflex was a revelation for me, because before that, I played around with the family’s Brownie Box camera. This always left me feeling frustrated due to the sloppy correlation between what I saw in the viewfinder and what turned out on film. With an SLR that isn’t the case, because for the most part, what you see is what you get. This gave me a sense of fidelity and confidence about the resulting images. Buying that first camera culminated several years of growing enthusiasm about images. I also have to thank some high school teachers who introduced me to some of the world’s great artists. While looking at their paintings, I was enthralled with how a two-dimensional space could transport a viewer. As flying became part of my working life, it also became a major part of my visual inspiration. By the time I left college to enter full-time professional pilot training, my camera was already an essential part of my life. The sky had become my studio and the camera seemed to be the natural tool.

You’ve built your own aircraft (see page 3). Is there a little bit of Inspector Gadget in you?

Actually, I’m not that much of a tinkerer. Building my

own plane was strictly about expanding my capabilities. When my life path brought me to live among the Navajos in Northern Arizona — and I had flown there for a few years as a working pilot — I reached a kind of creative crisis. Up to that point, I’d photographed opportunistically out of planes I flew for a living, which gave me a strong sense of what was truly possible based on my limited success. The greatest obstacle was the plane I flew, which photographically became increasingly intolerable. Flying over some of the most amazing landscapes in the world continued to feed my inspiration. I knew no greater thrill than the making of a strong aerial photograph, so it was time to build my own flying machine dedicated to that purpose. After a lot of investigation, I realized this was going to be a very unconventional aircraft, and the only way I could fly with confidence was to build it myself.

You see the world from a unique perspective. Are there specific things you like to communicate with your images?

I have an attitude of awe and even reverence as I fly. When I look down, I’m aware that this is our home, and we humans thrive in a kind of symbiosis with the planet. Even though not all of us spend our time looking down from above, most of us are capable of recognizing the singular elegance and integrity of this place.

Do you have any tips for people starting out in photography?

There’s one key ingredient: passion. If you can find it and feed it, it can guide you even when your way is not clear. Your passion is your answer to what life has given you; it has great force.



Adriel Heisey flies and photographs from his Flight Design CTsw.

DAVID McLAUGHLIN

WATER RESISTANCE

If you’re hitting the water this summer, remember this: Water and cameras are not a good mix, so it’s critical to protect your gear. If you’re on a white-water rafting trip, you’ll need a waterproof case or a dry bag.

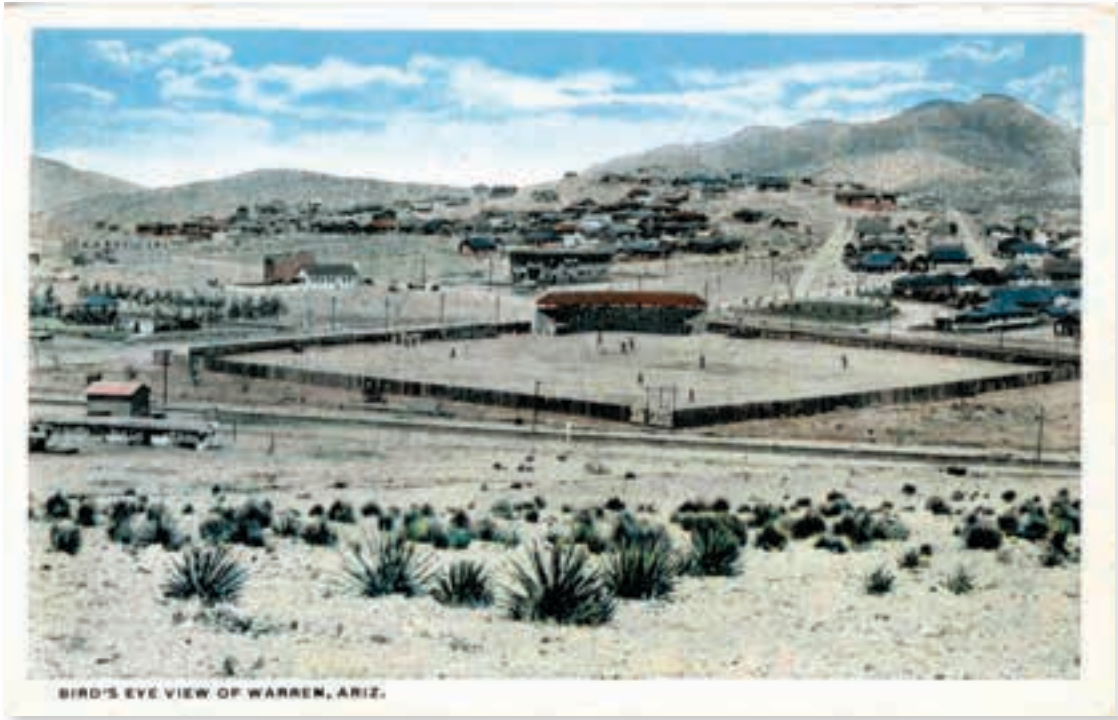


If you’re shooting from the shore or in a boat that offers safe storage, heavy plastic trash bags might be all the protection you need. Because the storage space on smaller watercraft is always limited, you should think about what you want to accomplish and choose equipment in advance. If you’re shooting water-skiers from the towboat, you’ll want to take a fairly long telephoto lens, at least 200 mm. If you’re photographing friends in a small sailboat, think wide angle, between 17 and 35 mm. Most importantly, be safe and have fun.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Look for Arizona Highways Photography Guide, available at bookstores and www.arizonahighways.com.

ONLINE

For more photography tips and other information, visit www.arizonahighways.com and click on “Photo Tips.”



The Old Ballpark

Wrigley Field is old. And Fenway Park is older. The oldest baseball stadium still in use, however, is in the small town of Bisbee, Arizona.

By LAUREN PROPER

THE ROOF ISN'T RETRACTABLE and it only seats 1,500 people, but Bisbee's Warren Ballpark holds the bragging rights to a record many larger, well-known and historic stadiums wish they had.

Baseball fanatics hardly ever put the diminutive stadium on their list of fields to visit, finding one way or another to disqualify it. They can't deny the facts, though: Warren Ballpark is the oldest baseball stadium still in use in the United States. Sorry, Red Sox fans, but Fenway takes a backseat.

Warren Ballpark was built in 1909 by a subsidiary of the Calumet & Arizona Mining Co. for \$3,600 to provide recreation to miners and their families. The Bisbee team played its first game on June 27 that year and formed a semiprofessional team that eventually became known as the Bisbee Copper Kings, which was recently

revived as part of the independent Arizona-Mexico League. One of the ballpark's more notorious historical happenings, however, had nothing to do with baseball.

In June 1917, I.W.W. union miners went on strike in Bisbee and Douglas over wages and mining safety concerns. On July 12, after weeks of unrest, a large sheriff's posse forced almost 1,200 striking workers to march to the ballpark. Once there, those who refused to go back to work were loaded onto railcars and sent to New Mexico.

The next morning, the *Bisbee Daily Review* published a strongly worded article in support of what became known as the Bisbee Deportation, calling it "The Great Wobly Drive." The paper praised the action as "a blow at traitors, spies and anarchists that will make this clique tremble everywhere west of the Rocky Mountains" and hailed the nearly 3,000 vigilantes as heroes.

It didn't take long for the games to resume, and for the next nine decades a wide variety of players entered the diamond in Bisbee. Teams ranging from the New York Yankees' farm team to the Bisbee High School Pumas have called the ballpark home.

Despite its rough patches, Warren Ballpark has weathered the past 10 decades and stands as a testament to baseball history. It's something to brag about.

This month in history



■ The U.S. Marine Corps recruited 29 Navajo Indians in May 1942 to become "code talkers" during World War II.



■ On May 11, 1889, a band of outlaws ambushed Major Joseph W. Wham, the U.S. Army paymaster, along the road between Fort Grant and Fort Thomas, getting away with \$28,000 in gold and silver coins.

The Tombstone Epitaph.

■ The first edition of *The Tombstone Epitaph* was published on May 1, 1880. The newspaper was founded by John Clum, a former Indian agent and Tombstone's first mayor.

For more information on the ballpark's centennial celebration game in July, visit www.friendsofwarrenballpark.com.

Don't Mess With Me

In the animal kingdom, there are plenty of creatures more menacing than the cactus wren. That said, Arizona's state bird isn't about to be pushed around. By KENDALL WRIGHT

Quiz anybody who grew up with *Looney Tunes* about the state bird of Arizona, and they'll likely guess the roadrunner. What state wouldn't want the speedy, crafty nemesis of Wile E. Coyote as its official representative? Well, Arizona, for one.

Instead of the Saturday morning stalwart, Arizona opted for the cactus wren. Marked with white stripes over its eyes — they look like bushy, white eyebrows — the brown- and cream-spotted bird is the largest wren in North America, as well as one of the most conspicuous.

Compared to other wrens living in Arizona,

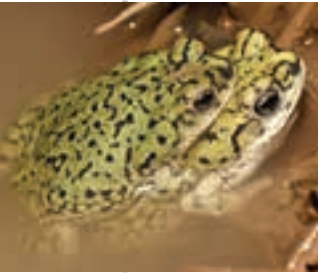
such as the canyon wren and house wren, both of which grow up to 13 centimeters in length, the cactus wren's 18- to 22-centimeter body towers in comparison. Not only is it distinctive in its size, but the state bird is also known for its harsh and high-pitched series of *char, char, char* notes, which have been compared to the sound of an old car starting up.

Although cactus wrens have never starred in a popular cartoon, they're still entertaining to watch, especially when they use their calls to scold cats, chatter at fledglings and warn away other birds from their nests. These little birds are fierce defenders of their territory,

and they take no chances when it comes to protecting their delicately enclosed, football-shaped, grass nests from intruders. In many cases, they even go so far as to build one nest for roosting and another as a decoy. That's because they know what birds are capable of — cactus wrens themselves make a habit of destroying other species' nests and abducting their eggs.

Like so many other desert creatures, this curve-beaked warbler is a survivor, relying on nourishment from insects, spiders, scavenged fruit and, of course, stolen eggs. Its diet usually provides everything it needs, including liquids. Because of this unique adaptation, the cactus wren lives comfortably in the arid climate of the Sonoran Desert, and stands tall as the state bird of Arizona.

nature factoid



Prince Charming

After a particularly heavy rainfall, songs of western green toads often echo across the desert, as lovelorn males call to prospective mates from pools of water suitable for laying eggs. The vibrant green or yellow amphibians, which have cream-colored bellies, aren't as large as their throaty croaks might indicate — they grow to only 2 inches in length.





TOM VEZO

Bird Watch

MAY 9
SUPERIOR

Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park, one of the Audubon Society's Important Bird Areas in Arizona, hosts International Migratory Bird Day, which offers an opportunity to glimpse exotic birds during their migration through the Sonoran Desert. You can take a guided bird walk, browse exhibit booths and watch for regular avian inhabitants such as Cooper's hawks, black phoebes and curve-billed thrashers. *Information: 520-689-2811 or www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/BOTH.*

Wyatt Earp Days

MAY 23-25 TOMBSTONE



Tombstone visitors take to the streets during the festival that honors the Old West's most famous lawman. The event includes a gunfight re-enactment, a chili cook-off, an 1880s fashion show, live entertainment, mock hangings, historical performances by the Tombstone Vigilantes and a Wyatt Earp look-alike contest. *Information: 888-457-3929 or www.tombstonechamber.com.*

Photography Workshop

Capture classic American West images during the Horses and Cowboys Arizona Highways Photo Workshop, April 29 - May 3. *Arizona Highways* photography editor Jeff Kida will teach you how to craft remarkable photos of both spontaneous and planned activities during this four-day workshop at White Stallion Ranch near Tucson. *Information: 888-790-7042 or www.friendsofahighways.com.*



JEFF KIDA

Arizona Highways Travel Show

MAY 30-31 PHOENIX

Learn about Arizona's best travel options during this show at the Phoenix Convention Center, sponsored by *Arizona Highways*, the state's travel authority. Learn about the newest activities, events and attractions, as well as unique dining and lodging spots from show exhibitors and speakers. *Information: www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com.*



Peach Fest

MAY 1-31 QUEEN CREEK

There are a couple of good reasons to visit Schnepf Farms this month. One is the Mother's Day Brunch held in the farm's orchard, and the other is peach season. All month long, you can pick your own peaches at Schnepf Farms, the state's largest organic farm and orchard. In addition, look for Schnepf's annual Peach Festival this month, which celebrates the fuzzy fruit. *Information: 480-987-3100 or www.schnepffarms.com.*



Cinco de Mayo

MAY 1-5 STATEWIDE

Statewide celebrations commemorate the May 5, 1862, victory of a ragtag Mexican army over the French at the Battle of Puebla. Throughout the first weekend of the month, numerous Cinco de Mayo festivities include parades, Ballet Folklorico dances, mariachi music, piñatas, Chihuahua races and Mexican food and drink. From Clarkdale's Verde Valley Railroad Cinco de Mayo-themed train excursion to Tucson's Cinco de Mayo Festival, Arizona honors Mexican culture and traditions. *Information: www.arizonahighways.com.* ■



Sightseeing This Summer? Don't Miss ...

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS TRAVEL SHOW

The Arizona Highways Travel Show features the latest information on Arizona destinations, including Tucson, Sedona, Grand Canyon and Lake Powell, as well as photography demonstrations and hiking workshops. Get the lowdown on lodging, dining, scenic attractions and more.

May 30-31, 2009
9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Phoenix Convention Center Hall F

(Admission: \$5 at box office, day of event)

For more information, call 480-838-9123 or visit arizonahighwaystravelshow.com.



Family Adventures

By Kelly Kramer

Clark Griswold wasn't worried about finding the Grand Canyon. "It's the biggest hole in the world," he said. Whether you're loading up the "Family Truckster" for a trip to the world's Seventh Natural Wonder, or just looking for a quick, economical family vacation all your own, Arizona has something for every family. What follows are 15 of our favorites.





Sedona Area

DRY CREEK SCENIC ROAD

What's red and green and stunning all over? The answer's easy — Sedona. The 6.5-mile Dry Creek Scenic Road makes a fun family adventure without the stress of spending too much time in the car. Panoramic views of Red Rock Country are a given on this route, as are contrasting glimpses of dense conifer forests. Side trips aplenty will keep the little ones occupied as they amble around Oak Creek, Cathedral Rock and a number of ancient ruins.

Information: Dry Creek Scenic Road is a 6.5-mile stretch of State Route 89A from Milepost 363.5 to Milepost 370. Visit www.arizonascenicroads.com.

SEDONA HERITAGE MUSEUM

Many museums keep their exhibits indoors, but that's not the case with Sedona Heritage Museum. Taking advantage of Sedona's natural beauty and its host — Jordan Historical Park — the museum can be reached by crossing the bridge on Mormon Wash, parking in the museum's lot, then taking the scenic pathway, which leads through fruit orchards and past vintage farm implements. Once inside the museum — the one-time farm home of Ruth and Walter Jordan — the whole family will enjoy exploring the area's pioneer history. And, for a more modern look at Sedona, visit the museum's movie room. It's dedicated to the 100-plus big-screen pictures that have been filmed in the Sedona area.

Information: The Sedona Heritage Museum is located at 735 Jordan Road, off State Route 89A in uptown Sedona. Admission is \$3 for adults, but free for children 12 and under. Call 928-282-7038 or visit www.sedonamuseum.org.

OAK CREEK CANYON/SLIDE ROCK

Slide Rock in Sedona's famed Oak Creek Canyon is so cool, it's hot. The natural rock slide was named by *Life* magazine as one of America's 10 most beautiful swimming holes — and with good reason. It's surrounded by red rocks, of course, and views of dark pine forests. Plenty of picnic areas, hiking trails and wildlife-watching opportunities could keep a family busy for an entire afternoon or longer.

Information: Slide Rock State Park is approximately 6 miles north of Sedona on State Route 89A. Vehicle fees range from \$8 to \$10. Call 928-282-3034 or visit www.azstateparks.com/parks/SLRO/index.html.

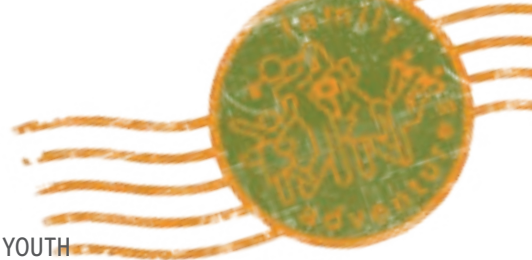


Phoenix Area

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

With more than 300 exhibits in five themed galleries, the Arizona Science Center gives a whole new meaning to “hands-on.” Since it opened as a small, storefront exhibition space at the downtown Phoenix Hyatt in 1984, the Science Center's mission has been to encourage kids and families alike to explore science. Housed in its own 140,000-square-foot facility at Heritage Square since 1997, the center features a planetarium and an IMAX Theater, as well as permanent and traveling exhibitions designed to inspire wonder, learning and a passion for the way things work.

Information: The Arizona Science Center is located at 600 E. Washington Street in Phoenix. Admission fees are \$9 for adults and \$7 for seniors, students and children. Call 602-716-2000 or visit www.azscience.org.



ARIZONA MUSEUM FOR YOUTH

It's no secret that planning summertime activities in Phoenix can strain the imagination. That's where Arizona Museum for Youth comes in. With a mission of encouraging creative play, artistic expression and — when it comes down to it — good, old-fashioned fun, the museum in nearby Mesa sponsors a number of summer classes for the whole family. Programs such as Parent-Tot Music Time offer memory-creating fun, and changing exhibits draw visitors year-round.

Information: The Arizona Museum for Youth is located at 35 N. Robson Street in Mesa. Admission fee is \$5.50. Call 480-644-2467 or visit www.arizonamuseumforyouth.com.

SAGUARO LAKE

Just a hop, skip and a jump from Mesa, Saguaro Lake is the perfect Phoenix-area spot at which to cool off. The lake's shore features plenty of picnic tables, a marina, restrooms and an aid station. Butcher Jones Beach is a sweet spot for swimming — open at 6 a.m., April through September — while scenic Bagley Flat Campground is open year-round with 30 available sites. If you're into angling, plenty of fish species — walleye, rainbow trout, bluegill, channel catfish and crappie — call Saguaro home.

Information: Saguaro Lake is located on Bush Highway, roughly 30 miles east of Phoenix. From Mesa, drive east on U.S. Route 60 to Power Road and turn left (north). Power Road becomes Bush Highway, where you'll come to the Saguaro Lake turnoff. Daily fees are \$6 per vehicle and \$4 per watercraft. Call 480-610-3300 or visit www.go-arizona.com/saguaro-lake.



Flagstaff Area

MUSEUM OF NORTHERN ARIZONA

This popular museum pays homage to the natural history and cultures of the Colorado Plateau. While adults love the Navajo and Hopi art and jewelry exhibits, kids will flock to the museum's other features, including a life-size skeletal model of a dinosaur, an amphibian pond and a touch-screen journey through one of the museum's murals. The new 17,000-square-foot Easton Collection Center is expected to be completed this year, and will feature a “living roof,” complete with a garden of native grasses and wildflowers.

Information: The Museum of Northern Arizona is located at 3101 N. Fort Valley Road in Flagstaff. Admission fees are \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$5 for students and \$4 for children ages 7 to 17. Call 928-774-5213 or visit www.musnaz.org.

GRAND CANYON FIELD INSTITUTE

It seems like a given — loading up the family wagon and heading toward Arizona's grandest gulch — but visiting the Grand Canyon can mean much more than great photo opportunities. A program of the Grand Canyon Association, the Grand Canyon Field Institute offers families a chance to truly explore the Canyon with classes in hiking, wilderness studies, photography, culture and natural history. And, thanks to the Field Institute's partnership with the National Park Service, the classes are fully supported by the world's foremost Canyon experts.

Information: GCFI class schedules and fees vary. Call 866-471-4435 or visit www.grandcanyon.org/fieldinstitute.





Lava River Cave
PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID ELMS JR.

LAVA RIVER CAVE

When it comes to an educational family adventure, Lava River Cave in Coconino National Forest combines history, mystery and nature. The mile-long lava tube formed roughly 700,000 years ago, when a volcanic vent let loose at Hart Prairie. Now, evidence of the ancient eruption remains in the form of undulations on the cave floor and, overhead, stone icicles. Take a couple of light sources, sturdy shoes and warm clothes to explore the cave. Even during the summer, temperatures inside are chilly.

Information: Drive 9 miles north of Flagstaff on U.S. Route 180, then turn left onto Forest Road 245. Continue for 3 miles to Forest Road 171 and turn left (south). Travel 1 mile to Forest Road 171B and turn left, then continue on to the cave. Vehicle parking fees are \$5 per day. Call 928-527-3600 or visit www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.



White Mountains Area

WOODLAND LAKE PARK

The 583-acre Woodland Lake Park is so much more than a lazy afternoon hangout. Tennis courts, softball fields, fishing, hiking and equestrian trails, bike paths, boating and volleyball courts have transformed the recreation area into a type of outdoor activity theme park. In fact, Woodland Lake is so loved by locals and visitors alike, they refer to it as the “crown jewel” of Pinetop-Lakeside. Even if you’d rather spend your visit lounging, there’s plenty for you to do, including bird-watching and picnicking.

Information: Follow State Route 260 through Lakeside toward Pinetop, past the Blue Ridge Schools. Turn right onto Woodland Lake Road and into the park. Ramadas are available for a \$20 rental fee. Call 928-368-6700 or visit www.wmonline.com/attract/woodland.htm.

APACHE CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM

To the White Mountain Apaches, their cultural center and museum is *Nohwike’ Bagowa*, or “House of our Footprints.” Indeed, it’s possible to trace the footprints of Apache history by exploring the museum’s extensive collection of baskets, restored cabins, artwork and interpreted oral history. The museum’s shop is a draw, as well, offering beautiful beadwork, basketry, Crown Dancer figures, and a slew of Fort Apache and White Mountain souvenirs.

Information: The museum is located 30 miles south of Pinetop at Fort Apache Historic Park. From Pinetop, travel south on State Route 73 to its intersection with Indian Route 46, about 5 miles south of Whiteriver. Signs at the intersection guide visitors to the museum. Entry fees are \$3 for adults and \$2 for students. Children 10 and under are free. Call 928-338-4625 or visit www.wmat.us/wmaculture.shtml.

STINSON PIONEER MUSEUM

Snowflake might just be the prettiest name for an Arizona town. Named for Mormon pioneers Erastus Snow and William Jordan Flake in 1878, the town retains its small-town charm. The Stinson Pioneer Museum offers exhibits that explore Arizona’s 19th century pioneers, as well as the area’s prehistoric Indians. One of the museum’s most popular attractions is Lucy Hannah Flake’s loom — the one she used to weave rag and cloth rugs.

Information: The Stinson Pioneer Museum is located at the northwest corner of 1st South and 1st East streets in Snowflake. Call 928-536-4881 or visit www.ci.snowflake.az.us.



Tucson Area

ONYX CAVE

The history of Onyx Cave, in the Santa Rita Mountains, is nearly as interesting as the cave itself. Formed over eons by layers of limestone created from the remains of tiny, ancient sea creatures, the cave is a virtual honeycomb of rooms and passageways. Pioneer ranchers and miners first discovered the cave in the 1870s, and archaeological evidence suggests that hunters and Indians frequented the cave. Later exploration led to vandalism. Today, the cave is managed by a company that allows only a few people in at a time.

Information: To obtain a key to Onyx Cave, you must contact Escabrosa Grotto Inc. at least two weeks in advance of your visit. There is a refundable \$25 deposit for the key. Visit www.escabrosa.org or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado/forest/recreation/caves/onyx.shtml.



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

The mission of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is simple: “To inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation and understanding of the Sonoran Desert.” And it’s hard to visit the museum without falling instantly in love. A botanical garden, zoo and natural history museum all rolled into one, it’s a great place for children and adults to learn about the Sonoran Desert’s varied and beautiful plants and creatures, from bobcats and coyotes to angel’s trumpet and zebra agave.

Information: The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road in Tucson. June through August, admission is \$9.50 for adults and \$2.25 for children ages 6 through 12. From September through May, admission is \$13 for adults and \$4.25 for children ages 6 through 12. Call 520-883-2702 or visit www.desertmuseum.org.

ANZA TRAIL

Spanish Captain Juan Bautista de Anza had a catchphrase that rallied his followers into action: “Everyone mount up.” It worked. Anza led nearly 300 people from Nogales to San Francisco — 1,200 miles in all. Today, you can retrace Anza’s route along the Anza Trail, which traverses amazing Arizona monuments, including Tumacácori National Historic Park, Tubac Presidio State Historic Park, Mission San Xavier del Bac and Casa Grande Ruins National Monument.

Information: Call 510-817-1323 or visit www.nps.gov/juba.

Sue Tygielski holds a common barn owl at Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson. PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL & JOYCE BERQUIST

Water, Water Everywhere

It's ironic, when you think about it. Arizona isn't exactly known for the combination of hydrogen and oxygen. Canyons and cactuses, yes; water, no. Well, like the Arizona Cardinals, who proved that a football team from the desert really could go to the Super Bowl, we're using this month's portfolio to prove that Arizona has some of the most spectacular watering holes in the world. See for yourself.

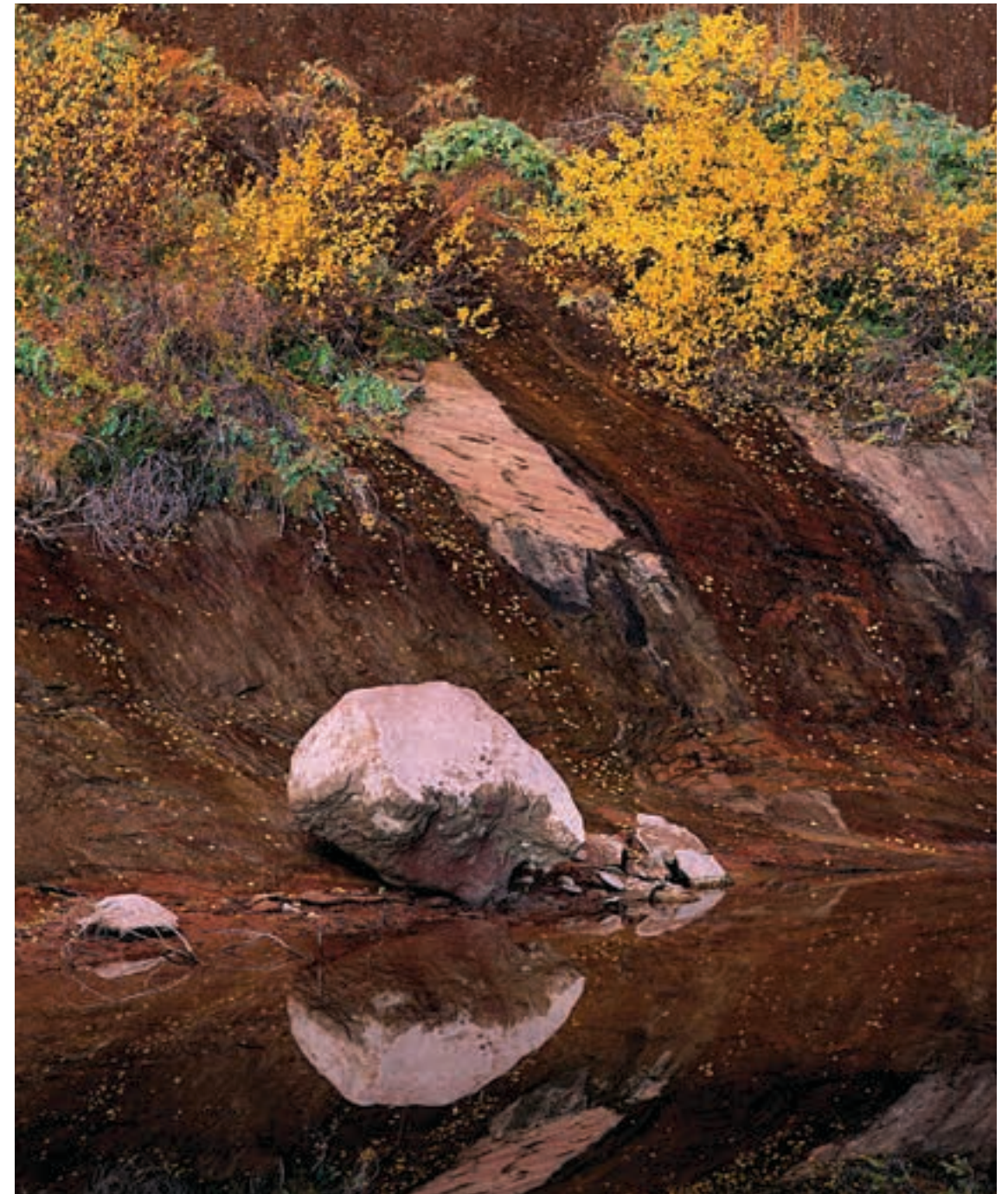
👁️ BY GARY LADD 👁️



Impressionist Inlet A sapphire-blue sky and Lake Powell's sandstone rocks provide a water-colored reflection in the shallows of Confluence Cove (preceding panel).

Cloudy With a Chance of Rain Near House Rock Rapid, the Colorado River spills over boulders (left) as a late-afternoon sun highlights shadows created by the cliffs of Marble Canyon.

Golden Arches Yellow buckthorn leaves brighten the wall of a sandstone amphitheater tucked beside a tributary of the Escalante River arm of Lake Powell (below).





Tranquilo Near Lake Powell in Northern Arizona, a placid pool reflects a stunning landscape that includes Rainbow Bridge, the largest natural bridge in the world.



Daybreak Navajo Mountain rises on the distant eastern horizon as an early March day dawns, giving a golden glow to Lake Powell's calm surface.



Canyon Cascade During a November rainstorm, a waterfall pours from the top of a sandstone alcove (left) near the confluence of the San Juan and Colorado rivers, north of Rainbow Bridge.

Nature's Art Ice crystals form an abstract pattern on the surface of a shallow pool at Lake Powell (below). ■



An aerial photograph of Lake Powell at sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, yellow, and purple, with the sun low on the horizon. The lake's surface reflects these colors, and its winding arms are visible against the dark, rugged landscape of the surrounding canyon. The title "A Better View" is overlaid in a large, orange, serif font on the right side of the image.

A Better View

The Grand Canyon is spectacular no matter where you're standing — on the South Rim, along the river or on the roof of a Winnebago. Those vantage points, however, pale in comparison to the views you'll get from a Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter. It's the best way to see the Canyon, as well as Sedona, Monument Valley and every other inch of Arizona.

By Keridwen Cornelius
Aerial photographs
by Adriel Heisey

► From above, a stunning sunset sky highlights an arm of Lake Powell near Antelope Canyon.

We’re soaring east over Lake Powell as the Colorado River goosenecks and loops like it’s writing in cursive. It scrawls an “S,” then smears into the San Juan River, fading from aquamarine to chalky bottle-green before scribbling through an expanse so prehistoric-looking I half-expect to spot a herd of stegosauruses, but instead see the monoliths of Monument Valley looming on the horizon.

This 700-foot-high vantage point comes courtesy of a fire-engine-red Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter. We’re on Flying M Air’s six-day Southwest Circle Helicopter Adventure, which touches down at Sedona, the Grand Canyon, Lake Powell, Monument Valley and Flagstaff, while cruising over several famous — and secret — spots in between.

As our shadow streaks over the isolated dirt roads and hogans that mark the Navajo Nation, it dawns on me — as it has many times on this trip — that the advantage of helicopter travel is not just the jaw-dropping aerial views. It’s that, as chief pilot Maria Langer says, “You can see things by helicopter that you’re not going to see any other way.”

A Jeep can trundle you along back roads, but up here back roads are meaningless; we’re *beyond* back-of-beyond. A small airplane offers vertiginous bird’s-eye views from tiny windows, but it lacks the maneuverability to trace the curves of a river gorge or wheel around red-rock spires. More on those later.



JEFF KIDA

► Flying M Air’s Maria Langer (above) pilots a Robinson R44 Raven II helicopter. Cradled in a verdant valley in Central Arizona, Horseshoe Reservoir (right) accents the desert landscape with a color scheme of blue and green.

The trip begins conveniently, if surprisingly, on a helipad atop Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport’s Terminal 3 parking structure. This makes for the most disconcerting takeoff of the whole trip, partly because it’s the first, and partly because, as we rise above the roof, it suddenly drops off.

Donning sound-canceling headphones and microphones, we tune into a radio frequency buzzing with the language of aeronautics. The alphabet becomes words — Romeo, Sierra, Tango, Uniform — while “Nine” is “Niner,” and “Yes” becomes “That’s affirmative.”

“Phoenix Tower, helicopter Six-Three-Zero-Mike-Lima on the Terminal 3 helistop with Sierra, Sharp Echo, would like a departure north to McDowell and then west to Central,” Langer fires off methodically.

“Helicopter Zero-Mike-Lima, approved as requested. Pass behind the Boeing Airbus on runway Zero-Eight on departure,” air traffic control replies.

“Zero-Mike-Lima departing to the north,” says Langer, and we’re off, flying 400 feet above Central Avenue, nearly scraping the skyscrapers. From our Superman’s-eye view, homes look like Monopoly pieces, cars like Hot Wheels in slow-motion. Everything seems small and flimsy, including us.

This is a four-passenger helicopter, though only three are aboard. A full R44 Raven II weighs 2,500 pounds, compared with a small airplane’s 19,000 pounds or a 747’s 900,000-plus pounds. In the breeze, it feels like we’re dangling from a baby’s mobile.

But this is only my second time in a helicopter, and my body quickly adjusts to the sensation. By the end of the trip, takeoffs will feel smooth and exhilarating, flights perfectly stable.

We navigate northwest over Lake Pleasant, circling over thousand-year-old pueblo ruins atop Indian Mesa, where ancient Hohokams could see — as we can — the whole valley rippling out below. We sidetrack over the faded grandeur of Castle Hot Springs resort and a deserted, vandalized mansion on a remote mountain saddle. Langer tells us the tragic story of the couple who built and then abandoned the home. She then points at the Bradshaw Mountains below us and tells us that miner Isaac Bradshaw’s grave is somewhere amid the cactuses.

“When you’re flying, you can see things that are forgotten,” Langer says. “Other people don’t know that there’s anything out here.”

From above, we see history that might appear as a footnote, if at all. These are the hard-to-reach badlands of outlaws, pioneers and ancient Indians.





As the land's elevation rises, the saguaros recede, replaced by paprika-dusted earth. Then come the manicured landscapes — the farms and green acres of Prescott Valley, the mined terraces of Jerome's Cleopatra Hill. We can see how one ecosystem merges with another, how the hues of the land sometimes blend like watercolors, sometimes delineate abruptly as an abstract painting. "You can see," says Langer, "how things fit together."

Even from the air, Sedona's red rocks appear as a surprise, peeking out of a green and chalky terrain. The city's airport, set on a mesa ringed by vermilion buttes, bills itself as America's Most Scenic. We hover to a gentle landing, as though cupped in someone's palm and set down.

We'll spend the night in a room with a view at Sedona's Sky Ranch Lodge, atop Airport Mesa. But first, continuing our off-the-grid theme, we'll take the Rough Rider Remote Jeep Tour with Earth Wisdom Tours.

As our guide and shaman Larry Sprague drives us past sites where he leads medicine-wheel ceremonies and vision quests, I'm struck by the silence. It feels like I'm still wearing sound-muffling headphones. In two totally different modes of transport — the quiet cocoon of the helicopter, and the Jeep, which bucks and heaves like a mechanical bull — we've bypassed the usual introduction to Sedona, single-file traffic that deposits visitors into a commercialized downtown.

The next morning, after watching the sunrise from Airport Mesa, we board the helicopter and take off to slalom between Sedona's red rocks and mountains, or in pilot parlance, "granite clouds." As we soar between two spires, my stomach rises up to ask if I'm sure this is safe. My mind tells it to relax and have fun, because Langer is an experienced and safety-conscious pilot.

We veer west over Sycamore Canyon, where veins of red maple trees trickle down crevices, russet rocks bulge out of a beige gorge

and Sycamore Creek's stones glint like a silver necklace in the sun. Then we climb to the western edge of the Mogollon Rim, toward the Coconino Plateau.

Trace your finger northward across a topographical map of these plateaus, and you'll feel several braille-like bumps amid the green Coconino Forest; then a smooth brown ridge that slowly rises to the Kaibab National Forest before plunging into the Grand Canyon.

This is what it's like in a helicopter: The air thins and chills as we cruise at about 100 knots, or 115 mph, over a choppy sea of pines. Wind pinballs between hundreds of cinder cones, making this stretch turbulent.

Soon, the forest and extinct volcanoes dissolve into a prairie so flat and barren it looks ironed, with the tracks of the Grand Canyon Railway running through it as straight as a seam. Langer says it's quite a sight in summer, when the steam train billows through.

Farther on, a stubble of scrub brush appears, then thickens into a beard of juniper and piñon pines. We land at Grand Canyon Airport, which was carved out of a ponderosa forest a few miles south of the South Rim.

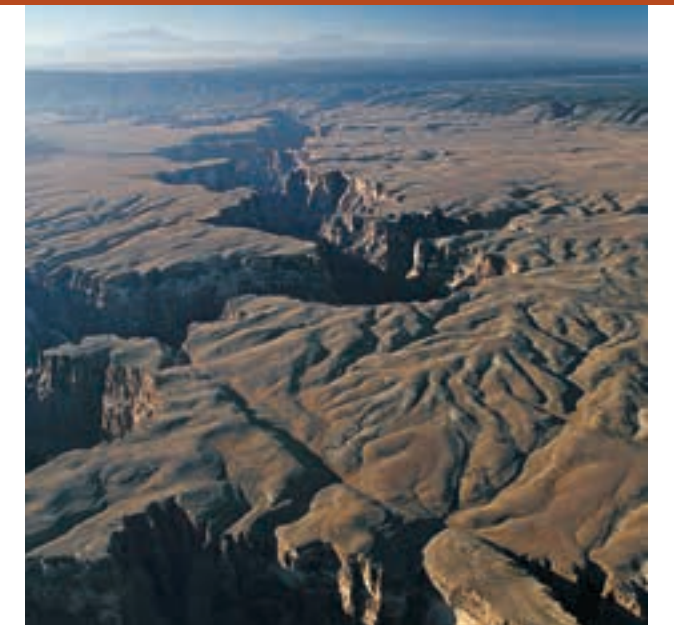
Because of strict flight regulations over the Canyon, Langer sends clients to Maverick Helicopters for a 45-minute excursion over the East Rim. Meanwhile, she refuels, arranges ground transportation, checks passengers into the hotel, drops off their luggage, makes sure their rooms pass muster, and sometimes even makes dinner reservations.

We spend the night in a Rim-view room at Thunderbird Lodge, dine at El Tovar, savor the tranquil evening atmosphere sans day-trippers, and photograph mule deer grazing on the hotel lawns. As we watch California condors drift above the Rim, I feel I now have a better idea of how the world appears to a condor.

► At sunrise, a diagonal pattern of red-rock ridges and dark shadows emerges on the eastern side of Wilson Mountain near Sedona (left). The Little Colorado River Gorge (below) snakes across the Painted Desert, northeast of the San Francisco Peaks on the distant horizon.

This is what it's like in a helicopter:

The air thins and chills as we cruise at about 100 knots, or 115 mph, over a choppy sea of pines. Wind pinballs between hundreds of cinder cones, making this stretch turbulent.





► A bird's-eye view of the eastern end of the Grand Canyon (above) offers a survey of the natural cutting and weathering that occurred over millions of years as the Colorado River flowed across the Kaibab Plateau. Long fingers of Navajo sandstone jut into Rock Creek Bay on Lake Powell (right).



“Clear!” Langer yells out her open door.

This is how every takeoff commences. We wait a few minutes for the engine and oil to warm up while the blades whirl, listening to a mechanical voice broadcasting not just temperature but altimeter, density altitude and dew point. Langer dials the Global Positioning System to airport code KPGA, destination: Lake Powell. On the screen, a green line delineates the forbidden air space over the Canyon, while a pink line marks our desired flight path. Also aboard are a compass and a navigation device that reports our whereabouts via satellite — not that we would get lost; Langer knows this terrain like the back of her hand.

From above, we can see the vast Kaibab National Forest and the North Rim brimming above the tree line on the horizon. Then the Coconino Plateau drops off, and the ground cracks into a jagged, toothy smile: the Little Colorado River Gorge. We drop altitude and follow the contour of a craggy oxbow. Not only are we getting an ideal perspective, but we are seeing a remote gorge that few people ever see.

Beyond it, the Navajo Nation stretches into a near-empty infinitude dotted with abandoned hogans and stone wall corrals, plus

ranches where Navajos reside in almost total isolation. Throughout this trip, it's surprising to see how many people live an hour from the nearest pavement. We spy a herd of wild horses and corral them from the air. Startled by the sound of the blade-slap, they set off in a single-file gallop, kicking up rust-colored dust.

The area around Lake Powell is so rich with geologic formations that the only way to take it all in is aurally. The Vermilion Cliffs, Echo Cliffs, the hot springs, the sheets of uplifted sandstone, the weathered hillocks stained mineral colors, and the Colorado River present themselves simultaneously in our field of vision. And what better way to photograph the Colorado River's Horseshoe Bend than from above?

Before we land at Page Municipal Airport, we fly over Antelope Canyon — a site that gives me an odd sensation when we tour it later that day. I get a sort of double vision, like one of those TVs with a box in the corner that shows you what's on another channel. Antelope Canyon unfolds before my eyes at boat level, but in the corner of my mind remains an aerial image of the canyon that shows me what's to come. Apparently, it's a pilot's condition: “I see this lake differently than most people,” Langer says, “because I see it from above.”



► From Thunderbird Mesa, Monument Valley (left) stretches southeast, where unique rock formations such as Totem Pole and Yei Bichei give the stark landscape an otherworldly appearance. Built on the slopes of Cleopatra Hill, Jerome, once a raucous mining camp, now serves as an unconventional artists' haven filled with unique galleries, restaurants and lodging.

“What a great L-Z,” Langer says of the Monument Valley landing zone, backdropped by the famous Mittens and located across the street from Goulding’s Lodge, where we’re staying, and from where I’ll depart for an afternoon Monument Valley ground tour.

The next day, we zoom over the Hopi Reservation. Our aerial perspective of First, Second and Third mesas makes it easy to see why tribes historically sought shelter and views atop these craggy uplifts in the otherwise flat land.

In Winslow, we refuel. The helicopter gets fuel as we eat fabulous Southwestern fare at the Turquoise Room in the historic La Posada Hotel. This Mary Colter-designed hotel’s quirky paintings by co-owner Tina Mion evoke a slightly less disturbing Frida Kahlo. Somehow the eccentricity works with our next flyover sights — the otherworldly Meteor Crater, the volcano-cum-art-work-in-progress Roden Crater and the Grand Falls of the Little Colorado River, a.k.a. Chocolate Falls. Unfortunately, on this dry autumn day, it might more aptly be called Cocoa Powder Wash.

The soil blackens and cinder cones appear as we return to the volcanic region near Flagstaff. It calls to mind what our Sedona Jeep tour guide told us: Vortexes are the above-ground manifestations of magma plumes rising from the Earth’s core — the same forces that erupt into volcanoes. It all fits together.

We descend into Flagstaff, where Langer puts guests up in either the Hotel Monte Vista or the charming Inn at 410 Bed and Breakfast. Some of the architecture downtown — like the David Babbitt building — is constructed from the same volcanic rock we’ve been flying over.

The next day, we head back to Phoenix, zigzagging over the emerald-colored Verde River. As we transition from rural to urban, it strikes me that, in our everyday lives on the ground, we’re constantly rutted in straight lines and boxes. Up here, though, we’re released from the geometry of straight lines, free to follow the curves and squiggles of topography.

With the low altitude and views from the dragonfly-eye windows, helicopter travel feels like an intimate encounter with the landscape. It’s a totally different experience from the insulated capsule and rigid flight path of a 747. I’ve lived in Arizona my entire life, but feel like I’ve never really seen the big picture before, how everything — ecosystems to history to architecture — interrelates.

As helicopter Zero-Mike-Lima hovers to the tarmac, I think: *Was this the trip of a lifetime?*

That’s affirmative.

For more information on Flying M Air’s Southwest Circle Helicopter Adventure or other excursions, call 928-231-0196 or visit www.flyingmair.com. ■



The Colorado River flows through Topock Gorge in the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, a feeding ground for thousands of migratory birds.

In Western Arizona, the Interstate 40 bridge and a railroad trestle cross the Colorado River side by side. The bridges divide two worlds. To the north lies Topock Marsh, an artificially created backwater of tranquil lakes and cattails. To the south lies Topock Gorge, an absolutely beautiful place comprising 20 miles of narrow, twisting river. **Either way, the water under the bridges is something special.**

BY DAVE ESKE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTY CORDANO

This Gorge Is Gorgeous

It was a good day to canoe down Topock Gorge. The spring weather was temperate, with no hint of the fiery summer to come. By then Five Mile Landing — our campsite on Topock Marsh — would be deserted, and once again, the hawks, roadrunners, owls, raccoons and beavers would own the marsh.

After a quick breakfast, our party of four drove 8 miles south to the launch site at Topock Marina through a huge stand of salt cedars. These 19th century Asian imports have nearly replaced the native cottonwoods and willows that once flourished along the river. Hoover Dam eliminated the cleansing floods, and as soil salinity soared, native trees dwindled, but not the deep-rooted, saline-tolerant salt cedars. Today, refuge biologists struggle to contain them while re-establishing cottonwoods and willows, both vital to wildlife.

Created in 1941, Havasu National Wildlife Refuge stretches south from Needles, California, to upper Lake Havasu and comprises 37,515 acres. It is habitat for more than 300 species of birds, 47 species of mammals, 20 species of fish and almost 30 species of reptiles. Every year, it attracts roughly 1.5 million recreational boaters, anglers, bird-watchers and hunters.

Shortly after 7 a.m., we shoved off on the 15-mile trip. Photographer Marty Cordano and friend Hoven Riley manned one canoe. Hoven's wife, Seiko, and I manned the other. Just beyond Topock Marina, Interstate 40 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway trestle cross the Colorado River into California side by side, then swing north toward the dusty town of Needles. The blackened trestle reminded us that frontier trains clattered over these parts long before the SUVs swooshing past on the highway. In fact, steamboats ferried supplies up and down the river in the 1860s, 20 years before the trains arrived. Their mooring spikes still protrude from sandstone cliffs in the gorge.

In a sense, the bridges divide two worlds. To the south lies the gorge, 20 miles of narrow, twisting river in as natural a state as can be found anywhere on the Colorado. To the north lies the marsh, an artificially created backwater of tranquil lakes and cattails separated from the river by a levee. Refuge



Suddenly, we rose high in the air, flipped sideways and found ourselves under water.

biologists keep the marsh alive by manipulating water flows to replicate historic river conditions.

“It’s a quiet world here,” said Marilyn Albright of Five Mile Landing, a privately leased RV park and campsite — the only place on the refuge where camping is permitted. “The river’s pretty wild.”

From her office window, Albright often sees roadrunners, beavers, even bobcats. “We had twin babies born here,” she said of the fierce felines. Occasionally, boaters deep in the marsh spot feral pigs, the elusive and environmentally destructive descendants of escaped domestic pigs.

In the late fall, thousands of Canada and snow geese descend raucously on the marsh, along with mallard ducks, green-winged teal and other avian visitors. For three months they delight the eyes of visitors and the palates of hunters before winging north again. Spring brings vibrantly colored Western tanagers, Southwestern willow flycatchers, hooded orioles, rufous hummingbirds and other “neotropicals” from Mexico and Central America. They join scores of regional birds, including yellow-billed cuckoos and Yuma clapper rails.

Dee Dee DeLorenzo, a local birder and marsh enthusiast, counts among her fondest memories the rarely glimpsed Yuma clapper rail taking a bath and familial Western grebes ferrying downy chicks about on their backs. Once, a disoriented juvenile bald eagle landed in front of her, then frantically tried to straighten out its disheveled feathers.

One of DeLorenzo’s favorite haunts is Pintail Slough, which, with its dike and secluded waters, affords a close-up look at white pelicans, great egrets and ring-billed gulls. The egrets are year-round residents, as are the great blue herons and double-crested cormorants that build nests in the long-dead mesquite trees rising from the water.

Topock Marsh, with its solitude and brilliant sunsets, inspires reflection. “You can walk for miles,” DeLorenzo said, “and never hear anything but birds and critters.”

Topock Gorge, on the other hand, inspires action. It always has, from prehistoric Indians who carved petroglyphs on its cliffs to the modern powerboats bouncing over its waters. In between, a parade of adventurers sought religious converts, beaver pelts, gold and, finally, control over the river itself.

As we paddled downriver, I, too, sought control, but only over the stern of the canoe. I recalled reading a 19th century essay that warned: “A canoe is like a horse of high mettle. But it is full of unpleasant surprises for the bungler.” It was not reassuring, considering horseback riding has never been my forte.

My concerns ebbed as we glided over the translucent green water into The Needles, a fantastical range of jagged sandstone spires stretching eastward from the river into the 14,500-acre Havasu Wilderness. The lunar-like landscape hinted of primordial upheaval and chaos. When illuminated by a full moon, the formations seem otherworldly.

The gorge’s spectacular panorama unfolds in rich detail when seen

from a canoe, with its natural arches, cliffside nests, soaring birds, cattail passages and quiet back bays.

The best time to spot wildlife, according to Ernie Doiran, a 43-year Topock resident, is in early morning or at sunset. Desert bighorn sheep gather at the water’s edge or on the high ridges around Devil’s Elbow just south of The Needles, and endangered peregrine falcons and American bald eagles circle overhead. Other wildlife includes white pelicans, snowy egrets, blue herons, hawks, beavers, burros, wild horses, mountain lions and, reportedly, even black panthers from Mexico.

By midpoint in our trip, the river was filled with jet skis, powerboats and the inevitable wakes. Whatever wildlife was around was well-hidden, so we focused on the geology, including a 250-foot-high sand dune that was probably created by a now-dormant flood channel cutting through the elbow.

At about this time, our canoe began acting out, insisting on heading for the bank or turning in circles. Seiko and I paddled furiously against the aftershock wakes of the powerboats. Nature, of course, rewards such incompetence. Suddenly, we rose high in the air, flipped sideways and found ourselves under water. Hoven grabbed the canoe while Cordano dutifully got it all on film.

A little farther down the river, Hoven spotted Picture Rock. We grounded the canoes and followed a trail through thick bullrushes and up a steep rock escarpment to the petroglyphs. The stick figures and symbols spoke to us across the centuries, although in riddles.

By the time we reached Blankenship Bend, a peninsula with a crescent-shaped beach jutting out of the Arizona side, the sun had dried our clothes. The beach is a favorite hangout for recreational boaters and college kids on spring break. The scattering of sun worshipers milling about the beach eyed us curiously, as if we were *Deliverance* re-enactors.

Not far beyond the bend, the topography flattens out, which telegraphed the end of our trip at nearby Castle Rock. Although a certain region of my anatomy ached from sitting and my hands cramped like claws, I felt strong and happy to have finished the paddle.

That evening we ate in a restaurant at Golden Shores, a retirement community overlooking the marsh. It was Taco Night. For 25 cents per taco and the price of a beer, diners could wallow in hog heaven. When the waitress brought the check, I forked over a soggy five-dollar bill.

“The river?” she asked.

“Yeah,” I replied. There was nothing else to say.

When You Go

LOCATION: 220 miles west of Phoenix.

GETTING THERE: From Phoenix, drive west on Interstate 10 to the Quartzsite Exit. Drive north on State Route 95 through Parker and Lake Havasu City to Interstate 40. Drive west on Interstate 40 to the Havasu National Wildlife Exit at the Colorado River. Topock is under the bridge.

HOURS: A portion of Topock Marsh will be closed October 1, 2009, to February 7, 2010, but visitors may view waterfowl from the observation tower of the refuge farm off Levee Road. Topock Gorge is open year-round.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: Campfires are prohibited. Camping and overnight mooring of boats are allowed only at Five Mile Landing on Topock Marsh. Hunting, fishing and boating in the refuge are subject to state and refuge regulations. Summer temperatures can exceed 120 degrees. Carry plenty of water and wear sunscreen and a hat.

INFORMATION: Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, 760-326-3853 or www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Arizona/havasu. ■



Topock Gorge (above) offers opportunities to spot wildlife such as bighorn sheep and beavers, as well as resident and migratory birds, including the endangered peregrine falcon (left) and the great egret (right).





PERKINSVILLE ROAD Although the last few miles can get a little hairy — no guardrails — this scenic drive offers some great history along with the wow.

BY KERIDWEN CORNELIUS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
GEORGE H.H. HUEY

Mountain man Bill Williams, rancher Marion Perkins and investor Eugene Jerome never met, but they're connected by two things. The first is that they all lent their names to Northern Arizona burgs. The second is the wildly

scenic Perkinsville Road, which slices through the historically well-trodden, currently forgotten countryside between their namesake towns.

Williams — a rough-and-tumble ranching, lumber and railway center appropriately named after a rugged adventurer — fell into decline in the last century. Twice. First with the demise of the Santa Fe Railway, second when it became the last Route 66 town to be bypassed by Interstate 40. Currently, as the southern terminus of the Grand Canyon Railway, it's experiencing a minor renaissance.

Begin this 47-mile drive in the colorful historic district of restored saloons and bordellos, heading south on 4th Street, which becomes Perkinsville Road.

The first stretch ribbons through the Kaibab National Forest, passing the occasional llama ranch and aspen grove. At about 11 miles, the elevation slowly drops, and with it the height of the pine trees, which now mingle with juniper, oak and mesquite. Flat-topped Mingsus Mountain looms into view, seeming so far away it's hard to believe it's your destination.

At 24 miles, the pavement ends, but the road is still suitable for a regular passenger vehicle. After 3 miles, turn right onto Forest Road 70 (still Perkinsville Road), which

wends its way toward Perkinsville.

Despite earning a dot on a map, Perkinsville is not so much a town as ... well, a ranch. But what it lacks in population it makes up for in big scenery. It's easy to see why, in 1900, the Perkins family put down roots in this pastoral landscape of grama grass backdropped by endless blue sky. The perennial Verde River burbles through, flanked by cottonwoods that in the fall resemble giant yellow cauliflowers.

You'll traverse the one-lane Perkinsville Bridge — the most reliable crossing on the Verde River, and a put-in point for rafters. A sign directs you to Jerome along much the same route that the Perkinses transported their beef to feed the town's miners in the early 1900s. Past Perkinsville, the landscape becomes a dry series of gray hillocks patched with yellow grasses and spattered with juniper.

Shortly, the road turns and changes dramatically. These last few miles are not for the acrophobic or lead-footed. You'll be negotiating a winding, gravelly one-laner carved out of the hills that follow the old bed of the United Verde & Pacific Railway. There's no guardrail to prevent cars from plummeting off the cliff. Which is frustrating given the views that tempt your eyes



ABOVE: Along Perkinsville Road, an old railroad bridge crosses the Verde River on the way to Jerome.

RIGHT: Following an 1895 railroad grade from Jerome to Chino Valley, the road winds around Woodchute Mountain.

off the road. The whole valley spreads out below, with beige hills undulating into Sedona's red rocks, and Humphreys Peak standing blue on the horizon. Then there's the unique opportunity of approaching the mile-high hill town of Jerome from above.

New York investor Eugene Jerome never saw his namesake town — not when it was teeming with miners and prostitutes at the turn of the century, and certainly not these days, when it's teeming with artists, tourists and flotillas of Harley-Davidsons.

Like the town of Williams, Jerome is a wild child made good, a Western town that's

followed a familiar boom, bust, baby-boom pattern. We'll never know what adventurous trapper Bill Williams, pioneering rancher Marion Perkins and copper mining mogul Eugene Jerome would think of the decline of their industries and the taming of this chunk of the Wild West. But it's something to ponder, perhaps over a famous cheeseburger at the Haunted Hamburger, where you can finally savor those valley views from the safety of the balcony. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more scenic drives, pick up a copy of our book, *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book (\$19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, call 800-543-5432 or visit www.arizonahighways.com.



tour guide

Note: Mileages are approximate.

DIRECTIONS: From Williams, go south on 4th Street, which becomes Perkinsville Road (Forest Road 173), and drive 27 miles to Forest Road 70. Turn right onto FR 70 (still Perkinsville Road). After Perkinsville, follow the signs to Jerome along Forest Road 72 (the Perkinsville-Jerome Road, also called Orchard Draw Road).

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: Accessible to all vehicles.

INFORMATION: Williams Chamber of Commerce: 800-863-0546 or www.williamschamber.com; Jerome Chamber of Commerce: 928-634-2900 or www.jeromechamber.com.

Travelers in Arizona can visit www.az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more.



RIM LAKES VISTA TRAIL In addition to the largest ponderosa pine forest in the world, this route offers great views, wildlife and an abundance of ozone.

BY KERIDWEN CORNELIUS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK BEREZENKO

Usually, hiking in cool country requires an either-or decision: the shady shelter of a forest ramble, or the panoramas of a vista hike? For those of us who prefer both to either-or, the Rim Lakes Vista Trail on the Mogollon Rim is the ideal choice.

The easily accessible trail begins at a parking lot just off Forest Road 300 — a scenic byway dotted with a series of overlooks that parallels much of the trail.

Marked by blue diamonds (they'll later be white), the trail meanders through a pine-scented forest of ponderosas, Gambel oaks and aspens. In season, it's freckled with yellow and lavender wildflowers.

After a little less than a mile, a cairn marks the spot where the path doglegs right, tracing the edge of the Mogollon Rim along a sun-rinsed woodland path. Here on what seems like the edge of the world, the wind constantly swoops up the Rim, sounding like a distant river. The landscape is textured with feathery grasses, prickly pines and plants with fluttering, petal-like leaves.

Between glances over your left shoulder to catch Rim views peeking through the trees, keep an eye out for elk and deer. You're practically guaranteed to spy Abert's

squirrels (you'll know them by their tufted black ears), which depend almost entirely on ponderosas for food and shelter. Speaking of which, you'll be clambering over several of the fallen orange-barked pines as you hike.

As you do, ponder these bits of trivia: You're in the middle of the largest ponderosa pine forest and the second-most lightning-struck area in the world, as well as one of only three pure air ozone belts on the planet. One would imagine all these facts are linked.

Soon you'll see a sign on your right for the Rim Campground. At this point, you have two options. The trail for the next 50 yards is overgrown, but passable. If you deem it too tangled, or simply want to scout out the campsites, walk to the campground, turn left and take the former logging road (now just a flattened path) behind campsite No. 4 back toward the Rim, where it rejoins the trail. Otherwise, continue straight, past the ponderosa stump, being wary of thorns as you hurdle a few fallen trees.

Either way, you'll soon arrive at FR 300's first overlook, Military Sinkhole Vista — a boulder balcony commanding views of cloud-shadowed, pine-blanketed hills.

At about 2.5 miles, you'll reach the paved (read: wheelchair accessible) section of the trail. Penstemon, thistle and other wildflowers add splashes of color as you stroll to the next scenic overlook — Rim Lakes Vista, with its dare-you-to-step-on-me granite outcroppings.

The trail ends at Woods Canyon Vista. If you have two cars, you can start your hike by parking one at the lot there (3 miles by road from the trailhead), so you can shuttle back. Otherwise, retrace your steps, enjoying the Rim views over your right shoulder. They're so stunning, they're worth a second look. ■

► Stunning views of ponderosa pine forests abound at Rim Lakes Vista (above) and Military Sinkhole Vista (opposite page) along this Mogollon Rim trail.

trail guide

LENGTH: 6.6 miles round-trip (or option to shuttle)

DIFFICULTY: Easy

ELEVATION GAIN: 7,590 to 7,640 feet

DIRECTIONS: From Phoenix, take State Route 87 to Payson, and then travel east on State Route 260 to the Woods Canyon Lake sign. Turn left into the parking area; the trailhead is to the left of the parking lot, marked by a sign that reads "Trail."

INFORMATION: 928-535-7300 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf

LEAVE NO TRACE ETHICS:

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly and pack out your trash.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
- Be considerate of others.



KEVIN KIBSEY



where
is this?

Far Out!

BY AMANDA
FRUZYNSKI
PHOTOGRAPH
BY TOM BEAN

Natives and tourists alike could learn something from this hiker. Although many people see the area as desolate — worth little more than a glance as they drive by en route to the better-known attractions nearby — this hiker takes his time over these domes. More than likely, he's exercising his brain and hoping to see a California condor circle above. Of course, he's also trying not to slip on the slick Navajo sandstone underneath.



March 2009 Answer:
Organ Pipe Cactus
National Monument.
Congratulations to
our winner, Glenda
Liebling of Ivins, Utah.

Win a collection of our most popular books! To enter, correctly identify the location featured above and e-mail your answer to editor@arizonahighways.com — type "Where Is This?" in the subject line. Entries can also be sent to 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009. Please include your name, address and phone number. One winner will be chosen in a random drawing of qualified entries. Entries must be postmarked by May 15, 2009. Only the winner will be notified. The correct answer will be posted in our July issue and online at www.arizonahighways.com beginning July 1.



Average summer high: 82°
{ Not bad for Arizona. }

Situated in the cool mountains at 7,000 feet and on the heart of Route 66, Flagstaff is midway between Sedona and the Grand Canyon, making it the perfect hub for your Northern Arizona adventure.

Flagstaff The destination for all seasons
flagstaffarizona.org | 888.591.2345

